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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NEW-ENGLAND SOCIETY

OF SOUTH-CAROLINA,

ON THE

22d DECEMBER, 1820.

BEING THE

TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

LANDING AT PLYMOUTH

OF THE

ANCESTORS OF NEW ENGLAND.

BY WILLIAM CRAFTS, Esq.—A MEMBER.

I love thee, thou Land of the rocks and the mountains,
Tho' the snows that invest thee have exiled the vine ;

I love thee, tho' icicles bar up thy fountains,
For still thro' the coldness of these dost thou shine.

Charleston :

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TO
GENERAL SULLIVAN,
OF
MASSACHUSETTS,

THIS LITTLE EFFORT IS INSCRIBED.

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ADDRESS.

ON this day, two hundred years ago, a handful of individuals landed, at an inclement season, on an unknown and barren coast; in the land of pestilence, on the territory of the Savage. Fraud or accident had diverted the course of their voyage, and they were placed beyond the protection, weak as it was, of European charters. Neither the Church nor the State accorded them the privilege of monopoly or of participation, and they landed with no better plea than their necessities, and no protector but their God.

Providence was not unmindful of them. That they might with scrupulous honesty occupy the soil, its former inhabitants had perished by disease, or wandered into exile—that they might in infancy be secure from Indian warfare, the natives had been withdrawn from the sea shore—and lest famine should involve them in early ruin, the scanty granaries of the Savage became the treasure trove of the stranger. The soil was rugged and mountainous, indicating the labor and perseverance which its culture required. It had not the baneful reputation of gold and silver mines, the cheap ruin of adventurers and nations. It was primitive and virginal, like the snows that invested it. Scarce a path on its surface

but the track of the hunter and his game—scarce a sound in its forests but the rude chorus of the winds.

Well may we ask what worldly inducement impelled this little band of men, women and children away from their friends and their home, in a little barque, across the perilous ocean, to an ice-bound rocky shore. Was it ambition? that master passion of the human breast, that knows not difficulties in the pursuit of power—To charge them with ambition were to accuse them of lunacy. Was it Avarice, that Cameleon curse of our nature, which assimilates us to all climates and all suffering in pursuit of gain? They had no means to traffic, and no arms to plunder. Were they convicts, doomed to expiate among the savage their sins among the civilized? They had been sinned against, not sinned themselves. It was that sense of wrong, which he, who feels it at all, feels most acutely and forgives never—It was that species of oppression, which he who endures all else never will endure, that gave birth to this desperate and heroic enterprize. You may invade a man's opinions, one by one, and disposess him of them all, until you interfere with his religious sentiments and his rights of conscience. You then strike a spring, whose elasticity increases with its pressure, rallying every other power in the system and quickening the motion of them all. You provoke his love of truth—his regard for early impressions—his sense of duty—his hopes of happiness—his pride—his zeal—his obstinacy—his chagrin and his resentment. He, who would willingly encounter these, knows nothing of the lessons of history. It appears to be the decree of God, that Religious persecution shall avail its

authors only shame and remorse, while it endows its victims with extraordinary courage, ensures them the Divine protection, and fits them for heroic suffering and achievement.

It matters not whether Princes regard faith as connected with loyalty. If they look upon a sectary as a traitor, they will soon find in him a rebel. The fire that assails the temple will soon find its way to the palace "*Proximus ardet.*"

To the world, enlightened as it is with regard to the terrible effects of religious dissention, it cannot but appear surprizing, how at a moment when the infallibility of the Catholic Church was so generally denied and deprecated in Europe—at such a moment, when the mind was on the stretch of enquiry to supply the chasm thus created in its faith—even then a new church discipline among the Protestants should be regarded as perfect, and enforced by the terrors of the secular arm. Nor can we look without pain upon the humiliating fact, that questions such as these, whether a surplice should be given in marriage—whether a surplice should be worn in preaching—whether in saying the Lord's prayer, we should say, "*Father Our,*" or "*Our Father,*" have stained in civilized countries the scaffold with innocent blood, and enlisted murder in the cause of bigotry.

Yet out of events, apparently insignificant, and by humble and simple means does the Almighty mould the destinies of the earth, defying and defeating human sagacity in the march of omnipotent wisdom. Had Hooper been allowed to dispense with his gown

the Puritans might have been retained in the body of the Church, and had Cromwell been allowed to embark for America, the world had not witnessed the crimes and the triumphs of that marvellous hypocrite.

The Ancestors of New-England, driven from their home by the persecution of Laud, after a short residence in Holland, where religious and political discussions prevailed with much force and freedom, embarked for America, in the hope of enjoying religious liberty, if not at home, yet under the authority of their Monarch. They asked his licence to live in an uncomfortable wilderness crowded with dangers, but so obnoxious were their doctrines, and so slighted their loyalty, that they were refused protection, and only promised indifference. They came however, and the treachery of the Dutch, who had furnished them a refuge, caused them to be landed far north of their original destination.

Houseless, frozen, miserable outcasts ! why not forsake your hopeless enterprize, and leave to the great men of the earth the costly office of planting Colonies, enlightening the Heathen, and taming the Savage.

“It was not” to use their own language “with them as with common men, whom small things could discourage or small discontents cause to wish to be again at home.” They formed on board of their ship a plan of civil and political government, a strict and “sacred bond to take care of the good of each other and the whole,” and disembarked with a fearless intrepidity, inspired by conscience and justified by Heaven.

If the Indian was friendly for a while, the climate made war upon them, and ere they could plant the earth with seed for the living, they opened it to find graves for the dead. They were sorrowful but not disheartened, adhering to their purpose with an intense steadiness of soul, which almost excites the belief, that an Angel had revealed to them the glories of their destiny. They endured neglect and oppression, the awards which the world in its charity and its discernment decrees to merit and to genius. Unthinking world! how often thy wrongs are sources of triumph, and thy honors, themes of ridicule. A strong affection among themselves—an unbending reliance on Providence—patience in suffering—perseverance in toil—strict honesty, and benevolent regard towards the Indians were their characteristics. By the aid of these, and the rigid purity of their manners, altho' peaceable, they conquered a country—although unambitious, they founded an empire—although obscure, they shall be held in honored remembrance.

The Colonies planted in various parts of the continent may be regarded as adjective, leaning for support on a religious or a political power. The Pilgrims of Plymouth stood by themselves. Other settlements, having royal copartners and ecclesiastical license, faded away and withered. These were refused a charter from the State—The Church regarded them as heretics, but their rights were embraced in the line of Virgil, "*Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.*"

Soon after the discovery of this Continent, if discovery be a proper term, the Pope, with a generosity that cost him nothing, gave one half of its territory to the King of Spain, and the other to him of Portugal. The amiable monarch of France, who

could not, as he said, discover these legacies in Adam's will, found a clause in his own favor, entitling him to a share, and Henry the 8th, who covered every thing, was alive to the charms of foreign empire and the honor of extending the true church.—The Dutch claimed dominion over a part, but their authority soon melted into allegiance to their neighbors, and their claims disappeared. These conflicting titles all agreed in this particular, that they were or pretended to be under royal and religious grants. Let us examine the rights which they conferred.—The Pope as the head of the Church, gave away the territory to the Spanish and Portuguese as the earliest Christian Discoverers. The gift was invalid and the reason was untrue. The Pope had no right in the premises and all the discoverers of this Country were Italians. It was destined for another Rome, and, if there had not been a misnomer in our christening we should all have been Romans. The right of discovery appertains to that only which has been lost, or which is new. An inhabited country can never be the subject of such a conveyance. Every grant accorded in Europe was consequently void and worthless for any right, that it conveyed. The unchartered Pilgrims of Plymouth therefore, had as ample and as just a title to this country as any body in the world, not excepting the Savages themselves. For it can be easily shown that the territorial rights of the Savage were limited in their extent, and inferior in their order to those, which the Pilgrims derived from God and nature.

It is not true as a general position, that the soil of this Continent ever belonged to the Savage. He had merely a right to hunt in its forests, with this addition, that in the parts of the soil cultivated and im-

proved by him, or occupied with that design, he had an absolute estate.

It is a rule, that the capacity to improve gives the best right to enjoy. It is also a rule, that when the exercise of one right becomes incompatible with the due use of another, that which is least important shall be discontinued. Now, what are we to believe was the design of the Almighty in placing man upon the earth? That he might draw forth its latent resources—enlighten its hidden recesses—cover it with smiling harvests—increase its capacities of production—analyse its substance, and adorn its surface with mansions of comfort and happiness, asylums for misfortune, nurseries for literature, and temples for piety. And wherefore did he give to him the magnificent Ocean? That he might traverse it for health, for pleasure, for riches, for learning, for liberty, for conquest and for glory.

The culture of the earth is that toil for bread, which the Scriptures ordain. Shall the hunter stand at the mouth of the forest and oppose the entrance of civilized man? Shall the Savage lift his tomahawk against the decree of the Almighty, and forbid the gospel to enlighten the heathen, or the wilderness to blossom like the rose? Shall territories, fitted to sustain thousands in polished life, be the exclusive domain of a few indolent stragglers? As well may the fisherman stand up in his canoe, and call the Ocean his! The escape of a deer disappoints the hunter at once of his prize and his empire; and if the fish elude his line, where is the sovereignty of the angler? The agriculturist is entitled to as much of the forest as he needs. The chase must yield to the plough. If the Indian will not change his habits, he need alter his abode. When the fox becomes tame he may

abide in the city, and when the Indian condescends to be civilized he may abandon the woods. We take without ceremony the possessions of a lunatic, holding them in trust for his reviving reason.

These sentiments may be perceived to indicate the extinction of the Indian race. And why should not that happen; nations are not immortal. Greece—beloved Greece, whose language is the nomenclature of nearly all that we know—whose institutions were the models of nearly all that we enjoy—whose heroes the portraits of nearly all that we admire—Greece is no more—her land is prostituted by the foot of the Turk and the song of Lord Byron.

Rome, after all her noble lessons and examples of public spirit—after the production of her immortal Code—after blessing the world with Cicero, enough of himself to embalm a world—after her magnificent achievements in the beautiful arts, did not the Barbarians destroy her?

And shall ignorance alone stalk in triumph on the earth, and shall not the Savage yield in his turn to the tide of civilization—What is there to redeem these from the mortality of nations? In the long lapse of ages what have they done for the improvement of mankind? Nothing. What for the cultivation or adornment of the earth? Nothing. What for their own amelioration or happiness? Nothing. What is their occupation? The chase—What their delight? Indolence. What their warfare? Stratagem. What their faith? Duplicity. What are they? What they were. What will they be? What they are. Will they never improve? No, never. The Sun and the Stars, the sentinels of Heaven, watching human improvements on earth have scarcely detected them in a solitary effort. To assign to the Indians

an indefinite longevity would be to arrest the motion and mutability of Earth and its empires. Yet in their history there will remain redeeming virtues. Many a Monarch might covet the noble constancy of Montezuma, and the pure fame of Massassoit—and many a maiden emulate the sweet acts of Pocahontas.

The Pilgrims of Plymouth formed the nucleus around which ulterior accessions grew, and expanding became the Colonies of New-England. They purchased from the Indians their rights, real or imaginary, and James the First came with tardy reluctance into the confirmation of a settlement, whose birth had been obnoxious to him. Their religious independence soon led them to political inquiries. How difficult it is to stay the hand, that lifts but half a veil. Curiosity is like light, once give it admission and it penetrates every where. Charles the First called the Plymouth Colony a factious set. They began it is true, with denying hereditary right unless it were accompanied by hereditary talents and hereditary virtue; and whether we look to Virginia or New-England, we find the same spirit and the same declaration of the right of self-government in the Colonists themselves.

It required little sagacity to discover, that the British yoke would be borne no longer than it was comfortable, being regarded as an ornament, and never suspected to be a chain. It was accordingly broken into atoms, and the lightning, that destroyed it while it revealed the Independence of America, awoke the sleeping lions of liberty throughout the globe.

If, on this day, after the lapse of two centuries, one of the Fathers of New-England, released from the sleep of death, could re-appear on earth what would

be his emotions of joy and wonder! In lieu of a wilderness, here and there interspersed with solitary cabins, where life was scarcely worth the danger of preserving it, he would behold joyful harvests, a population crowded even to satiety—villages, towns, cities, states, swarming with industrious inhabitants, hills graced with temples of devotion, and vallies vocal with the early lessons of virtue. Casting his eye on the ocean, which he past in fear and trembling, he would see it covered with enterprizing fleets returning with the whale as their captive, and the wealth of the Indies for their cargo. He would behold the little colony which he planted, grown into gigantic stature, and forming an honorable part of a glorious confederacy, the pride of the earth and the favorite of Heaven. He would witness with exultation the general prevalence of correct principles of government and virtuous habits of action; how gladly would he gaze upon the long stream of light and renown from Harvard's classic fount, and the kindred springs of Yale, of Providence, of Dartmouth and of Brunswick. Would you fill his bosom with honest pride, tell him of FRANKLIN, who made the thunder sweet music, and the lightning innocent fire-works—of ADAMS, the venerable sage reserved by heaven, himself a blessing, to witness its blessings on our nation—of AMES, whose tongue became, and has become an Angel's—of PERRY,

“Blest be his God with one illustrious day,
A Blaze of Glory, ere he passed away.”

And tell him, Pilgrim of Plymouth, these are thy descendants. Show him the stately structures, the splendid benevolence, the masculine intellect, and the sweet hospitality of the metropolis of New-England. Shew him that immortal vessel, whose name is synonymous with triumph, and each of her masts a sceptre. Show

him the glorious fruits of his humble enterprize, and ask him if this, all this be not an atonement for his sufferings, a recompense for his toils, a blessing on his efforts, and a heart-expanding triumph for the Pilgrim adventurer. And if he be proud of his offspring, well may they boast of their parentage.

The descendants of New-England, wherever situated, must regard with sympathy the land of their Ancestors, and look back with pride upon their common origin. The statesman can find no brighter example of union, strength and harmony than that, under which these early associates grew into celebrity and power. They knew not sectional divisions—they were *one*—the strong supporting the weak, the weak confiding in the strong. They were *wise*—but alas, wisdom belongs to poverty and danger, and not to pride or prosperity.

In the happy days of our Republic we seem to be losing sight of the cardinal points of happiness. Local jealousies darken the political horizon, and fill it with dismay. The startling question of Missouri, teeming with unknown and unimagined issues—whence did it arise and where will it eventuate? It did not arise in New-England. The North and the South, like physical extremes, have the same tendency and resemble each other.

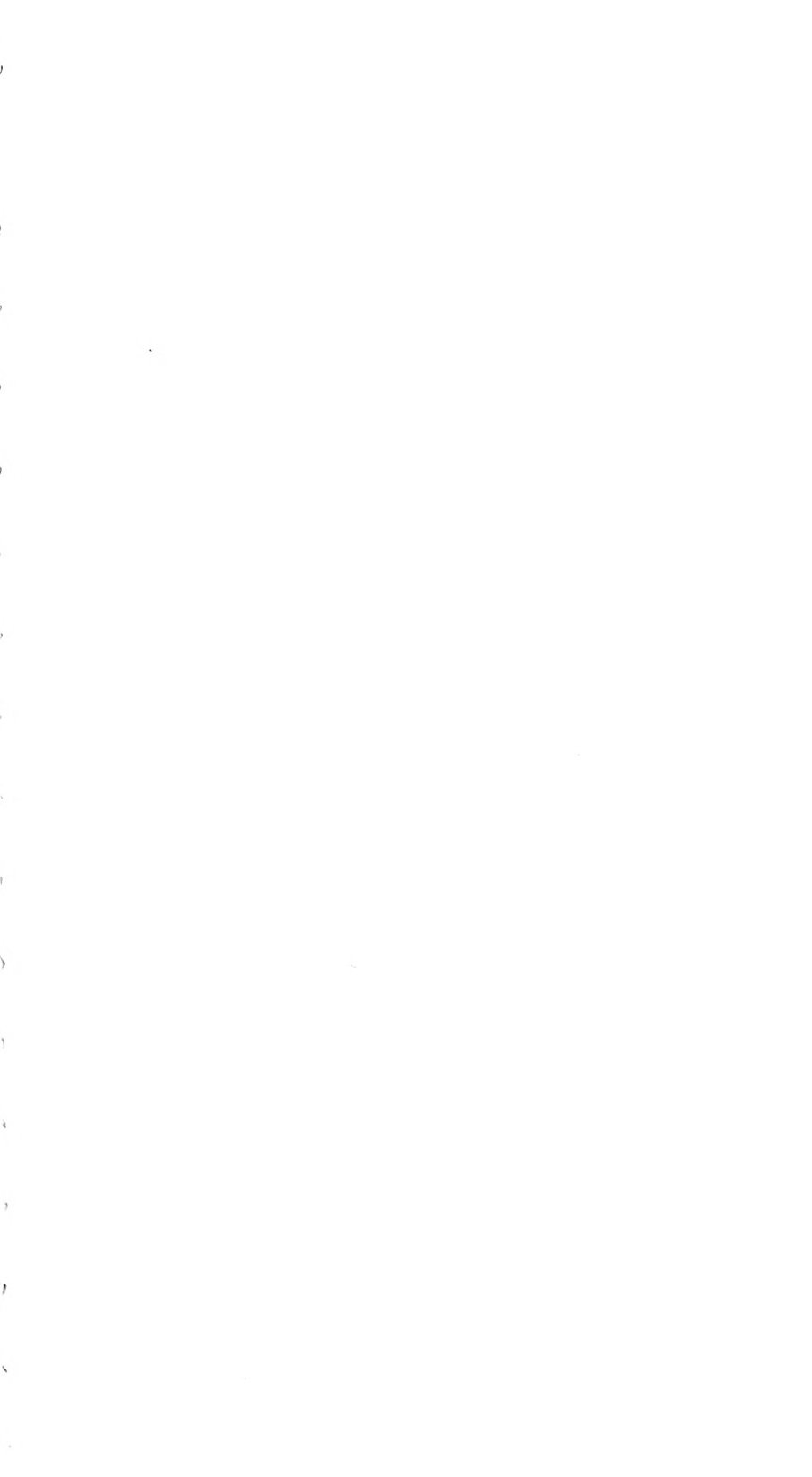
This evil spirit, for so we may call that, which has grown so suddenly and darkly over us, blending in new combinations all the elements of discord, originated, it is believed, in the intermediate States.—Speaking of it as men unacquainted with its views, but having every thing to dread in its progress, may we not say, that to question or to assail the early and sacred compromise of our confederacy seems to be no more honest, than to assail or invalidate lawful

rights—no more generous, than to taunt the unfortunate with their condition—no more patriotic, than to deny one's allegiance, and no more human, than to provoke the worst of civil wars. If these inquiries grow out of a love of power, it is that species of power which, as Pythagoras remarks of gold, improperly acquired, had better not be acquired at all. If it be humanity, it is the humanity of fratricide; there is too much darkness in the color of their charity, and too much distance in the scope of its relief. Let us hope, that we have mistaken the motives and object of these painful discussions. Let us hope, that our Statesmen, on all subjects of national concern, will look to the interests of the whole and of *each other*. The warrior disdains domestic weapons—the Statesman should despise local prejudices; and it is a triumph unworthy of honorable ambition to crow over Achilles by pointing at his heel.

Gentlemen of the New-England Society:—Unconnected with New-England by birth, I yet owe to it my name, and in justice to its inhabitants have penned this imperfect sketch. It is the record of active and persevering virtues, such as filled up and adorned and endeared the long life of your late worthy President and benefactor.* I miss from among you his venerable form—He rests from his benevolent labors. The useful only have a right to live, and sweet is repose after honorable toil.

What is life? But a pilgrimage under an uncertain sky, through dangerous paths, over obstacles fearful to encounter and difficult to remove. What is life, but a pilgrimage? which is happy only, when it is over.

* Nathaniel Puesell, Esq. deceased.



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